

Crassula connata (Ruiz & Pavon) Berger
erect pygmy-weed
Crassulaceae (Stonecrop Family)

Status: State Threatened

Rank: G5S1S2

General Description: Adapted from Douglas et al. (1998): A weak, reddish annual herb that roots nodally. The hairless stems are ascending or erect, freely branching, and $\frac{3}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. (2 to 6 cm) tall. The leaves are opposite, entire, succulent, oblong egg-shaped, and $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ in. ($1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 mm) long. The inflorescence of flower clusters is in the leaf axils. The flowers are usually 4-merous, greenish, and short-stalked but lengthening in fruit. The calyces are cup-shaped. The 4 sepals are acute and erect. The whitish petals are no longer than the sepals. The fruit are follicles that are less than $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (2 mm) long, purplish, and are 1 to 2 seeded.

Crassula tillaea is a weedy member of the same genus that can also be found on coastal bluffs in Washington. *C. tillaea* generally has 3 sepals, while *C. connata* generally has 4 sepals. There is also another native species, *C. aquatica*, which occurs in wetter habitats (mud flats, salt marshes) and has 4 rounded sepals, rather than the acute sepals of *C. connata*. A technical key may be needed for identification.

Phenology: Identifiable from April to May.

Range: This species is found from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands south to Washington, Oregon, California and west to Arizona and Texas. It also occurs in South America in Chile. In Washington, *C. connata* is found in San Juan County.

Habitat: This species prefers chaparral and wet to moist vernal pools on coastal bluffs. In Washington, *Crassula connata* is found at elevations of 15 to 100 ft ($4\frac{1}{2}$ to $30\frac{1}{2}$ m). Associated species include racomitrium moss (*Racomitrium* spp.), springbeauty (*Montia* spp.), hairgrass (*Aira* spp.), and stork's bill (*Erodium* spp.).

Ecology: *Crassula connata* grows in dry areas that may be seasonally moist.

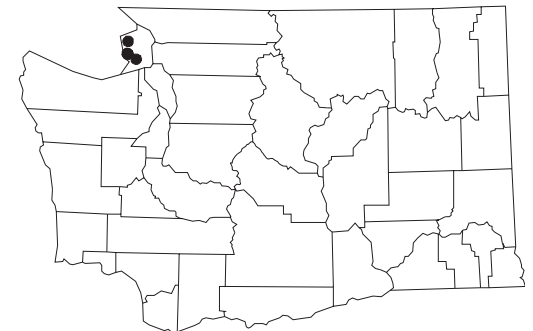
State Status Comments: This species is known from five recent occurrences in San Juan County. All populations are growing on private land.

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erect pygmy-weed



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Known distribution of
Crassula connata
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Photo by Michael Charters



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Inventory Needs: Dry, sandy to rocky, vernal wet areas at low elevations in San Juan County should be systematically surveyed. Known populations should be periodically revisited.

Threats and Management Concerns: Current threats include trampling and invasion by Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*).

Comments: This species is not in the *Flora of the Pacific Northwest*. Please see *The Jepson Manual* (1993) or *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia* (1998) for a description of the species.

References:

- Douglas, G.W., G.B. Straley, D. Meidinger, and J. Pojar. 1998. *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia* vol. 2: *Dicotyledons (Balsaminaceae Through Cuscutaceae)*. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Victoria, British Columbia. 401 pp.
- Hickman, J.C. ed. 1993. *The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA. 1400 pp.